

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-04

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /005 R

66612

DRAFTED BY:NEA/PAB:RAPECK

2/20/74 EXT 20466

APPROVED BY:NEA/PAB:DMCOCHRAN

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

S E C R E T STATE 032483

FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 032483 SENT ACTION BANGKOK INFO GENEVA,
ANKARA, THE HAGUE, KABUL, KATHMANDU, NEW DELHI, RANGOON, ROME,
HONG KONG, VIENTIANE & KUALA LUMPUR DATED 17 FEB 1974:

QTE

S E C R E T STATE 032483

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR

SUBJECT: US OPIUM POLICY: REVISED STATE 29845

REF: BANGKOK 2204; STATE 29845; STATE 31097 (NOTAL)

FOR AMBASSADOR KINTNER FROM EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

1. REGRET COORDINATION PROBLEM RESULTED IN SUSPENSION
OF ACTION ON STATE 29845. FOLLOWING TEXT HAS FULL
CONCURRENCE AMBASSADOR VANCE AND REPRESENTS COMPLETED
COORDINATION ON USG POSITION. WE REALIZE THAT YOU HAVE
ALREADY DISCUSSED SUBSTANCE STATE 26073 WITH RTG.
HOWEVER, IN VIEW THAI REACTION YOU MAY WISH OFFER
ADDITIONAL REASSURANCES ALONG FOLLOWING LINES IF IT
LIKELY TO BE USEFUL.

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2. I APPRECIATE YOUR CANDID ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPORTANCE
OF THE US POSITION ON CND AGENDA ITEM 9 TO THE RTG.
I HOPE EXPANDED DISCUSSION BELOW WILL PROVIDE USEFUL
BACKGROUND ON PRESIDENTIAL DECISIONS WHICH YOU CAN USE

AS APPROPRIATE IN BRIEFING RTG.

3. IN 1971, THE PRESIDENT STATED THE MAJOR US POLICY GOAL TO ELIMINATE ILLICIT PRODUCTION OF OPIUM AND TO REPLACE NATURAL OPIATES WITH SYNTHETICS. THIS GOAL REMAINS UNCHANGED. AT THE TIME IT WAS USG HOPE THAT SYNTHETICS WOULD BE AVAILABLE WITHIN FIVE YEARS TO ELIMINATE THE NEED FOR LICIT OPIUM PRODUCTION. THE OPTIMISM OF 1971 HAS NOT BEEN BORNE OUT BY SUBSEQUENT RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT. WE NOW FACE THE NEED TO SUPPORT LICIT PRODUCTION FOR AT LEAST ANOTHER DECADE.

4. IN APPROACHING THE NEED FOR ANOTHER DECADE OF RELIANCE ON NATURAL OPIATES, IT APPEARED PRUDENT PRIOR TO THE 1974 CND MEETING TO ASSESS THE ADEQUACY OF THE CURRENT WORLD MARKET STRUCTURE TO PROVIDE LICIT SUPPLIES UNDER THE MOST HIGHLY CONTROLLED CONDITIONS. THIS NEED FOR ASSESSMENT WAS UNDERSCORED BY A DIMINUTION OF US MANUFACTURERS' STOCKPILES TO UNSAFE LEVELS AND GROWING WORLDWIDE REPORTS OF LOW INVENTORIES AND SHORTAGES.

5. WE SEEK TO FACE THE REALITY OF A POTENTIAL SHORTAGE IN TERMS OF THE SAFEST WAY TO MEET MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS. IN SO DOING THE USG, WHICH HAD NOT PREVIOUSLY TAKEN A POSITION ON POPPY STRAW, NOTED THE INCREASING USE OF POPPY STRAW FOR OPIATE PRODUCTION. WHILE FURTHER RESEARCH IS NECESSARY, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT STRAW IS A POTENTIALLY MORE CONTROLLABLE PRODUCTION TECHNIQUE. ALSO PRELIMINARY USDA ANALYSIS INDICATED POSSIBILITY OF UP TO A 30 PERCENT GREATER YIELD FROM POPPY STRAW THAN GUM OPIUM. THUS, IN ADDITION TO THE STOCKPILE RELEASE, A SHIFT TO GREATER USE OF STRAW BECAME THE PRIMARY THRUST OF OUR REVISED STANCE.

6. IN REVIEWING TACTICS AND SUBSTANCE OF WORKING METHODICALLY TOWARD STRAW BASED MARKET, GAPS IN
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CULTIVATION AND PROCESSING RESEARCH BECAME EVIDENT. FOR EXAMPLE, INDIA INDICATED INTEREST IN OBTAINING ASSISTANCE ENABLING IT TO UTILIZE SECONDARY POPPY STRAW, BUT AMERICAN FIRMS WERE NOT IN COMPETITIVE POSITION DUE IN LARGE PART TO LACK OF EXPERIENCE IN THIS AREA. FYI: WE ARE MOST SENSITIVE TO OUR NEED TO OBTAIN FULL AND PROPORTIONATE SHARE OF INDIAN PRODUCTION AND NEED TO WORK THROUGH MULTILATERAL CHANNELS IN PROPOSING STRAW TECHNIQUES TO INDIA CONSISTENT WITH PROBLEMS OF YIELD AND ITS LABOR INTENSIVE ECONOMY. AMBASSADOR MOYNIHAN REVIEWED AND CONCURRED IN DEPTTEL 26073 DURING RECENT PRESENCE IN WASHINGTON. END FYI.

7. THE RESEARCH AND TESTING DECISIONS SUPPORTS OUR
OVERRIDING CONCERN WITH CONTROL AND THE INCREASING USE
WORLDWIDE OF STRAW.

8. AGAIN, LET ME MAKE IT CLEAR THAT OUR RESEARCH AND
TESTING EFFORT IS DESIGNED TO BE SHARED WITH THE
INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. ONLY BY MAKING THE OFFER TO
UNDERTAKE AND SHARE RESEARCH AND TESTING CAN WE
CREDIBLY BE ADVOCATES OF A MORE RAPID, YET ORDERLY,
TRANSITION TO STRAW. UNDER NO CONDITION WILL OUR
RESEARCH AND TESTING EFFORT DRIFT INTO DOMESTIC
PRODUCTION OF OPIATES FOR US REQUIREMENTS OR FOR EXPORT.
ANY SUCH STEP, OR EVEN A SUBSTANTIALLY EXPANDED DOMESTIC
RESEARCH PROGRAM, REQUIRES SPECIFIC NEW PRESIDENTIAL
AUTHORIZATION.

9. THE ISSUE OF PRE/POST CND TIMING WAS EXPLICITLY
RAISED WITH THE PRESIDENT. IT WAS CONCLUDED THAT A
YEAR'S DELAY WOULD JEOPARDIZE OUR INTEREST IN PROMOTING
A PRO-STRAW POLICY NOW AND WOULD INHIBIT OUR ABILITY
TO RESPOND POSITIVELY IN A MULTILATERAL CONTEXT TO
THE POTENTIAL SHORTAGE WHICH WOULD FACE THE US IF AND
WHEN THE STOCKPILE RUNS OUT.

10. WE ARE, OF COURSE, SENSITIVE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 27 JUL 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DRUG CONTROL, OPIUM, POLICIES, AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 FEB 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974STATE032483
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter:
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740268/abbrzcha.tel
Line Count: 133
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ORIGIN NEA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: BANGKOK 2204; STATE 29845; STATE 31097 (NOTAL)
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags: ANOMALY
Review Date: 22 MAY 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 MAY 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <30 DEC 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: US OPIUM POLICY: REVISED STATE 29845
TAGS: SNAR, US
To: ISLAMABAD
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005